



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MARIJUANA TRAFFICKER RECEIVES LIFE IN FEDERAL PRISON**

**United States Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced that Hector Marquez-Ramos was sentenced this morning to life in federal prison and former El Paso real estate agent Horacio Fernandez was sentenced to 160 months in federal prison for their roles in a marijuana trafficking organization based in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Over a two-year period, this organization was responsible for importing and distributing to the upper mid-west, east and northeastern portions of the United States in excess of 48,000 kilograms of marijuana.

In addition to the prison terms, United States District Judge David Briones ordered: Marquez-Ramos to pay a \$50,000 fine and forfeit to the government \$2.9 million in drug distribution proceeds; and, Fernandez to pay a \$20,000 fine and be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing his prison term.

Last September, Hector Marquez-Ramos, brother of ringleader Mario Alonso Marquez-Ramos, was found guilty of conspiracy to import and possess with intent to distribute over 1,000 pounds of marijuana, two substantive drug possession charges and conspiracy to commit murder. Based upon the evidence presented to them, jurors found that Hector Marquez, Mario Alonso Marquez-Ramos and others intentionally conspired with each other to kill Maria Elidia Liuzza by choking and beating her to death on February 15, 2005, in Juarez, Mexico. Courtroom testimony also revealed that Liuzza's death occurred in a house allegedly owned by the Marquez organization in Juarez and was committed to keep her son, a member of the organization, from cooperating with authorities. In February 2005, Federal authorities in Mexico executed search warrants at that residence as well as a second residence where they seized in excess of five tons of marijuana and a drug ledger.

Diego Villalobos, Lorenzo Villalobos, Ruben Acosta Vargas and Carlos Fabian Pando are currently serving federal prison terms of 210 months, 140 months, 168 months and 188 months, respectively. Each pled guilty to various drug charges prior to jury selection.

Mario Alonso Marquez-Ramos, Daniel Martinez, Esaul Guerrero and Christina Villalobos—all of whom face federal drug charges—are fugitives in this case.

The jurors also found that Fernandez facilitated the laundering of the drug distribution proceeds along with Diana Marquez, wife of Mario Alonso Marquez-Ramos and a former Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission tax compliance officer. Diana Marquez is scheduled to be sentenced at 10:00am on April 26, 2007. She faces up to life in federal prison after being convicted of money laundering and conspiracy to import and possess with intent to distribute over 1,000 pounds of marijuana.

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton commended the investigative efforts of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Assistant United States Attorneys Jose Luis Acosta and John Gibson are prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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